

Bass Hill RSL Sub-Branch

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"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance"

Newsletter

Issue 117

July, 2023

SUB-BRANCH COMMITTEE—2023—2026

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| President | Ian Muirhead* |
| Vice Presidents | Ambrose Dinh JP, Jamil (Jim) Baba |
| Secretary | Gary Roser JP * - 0409 919 364 |
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| Minute Secretary | Lee-Ann Taylor JP* |
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| FSMDC Alt Delegate | Ian Kennedy, Gary Roser JP |
| Sub-Branch Trustees | Ron Duckworth, Jim Baba, Jeff Stone |
| Newsletter Editor | Gary Roser JP - 0409 919 364 |
| Newsletter Editorial Production | Ron Duckworth |
| Bankstown City Aged Care | Ian Muirhead, Greg Brown |
| Schools Liaison Officer | Ambrose Dinh JP |

For service, ring the Secretary, Gary Roser on 0409 919 364

* Life Member



EDITORIAL **

Gary Roser, Editor

Another two months have passed and we are no further with the Incorporation of this sub-Branch.

There is no doubt that ANZAC House is stalling it, trying to force us into becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee. Do we have confidence in our Board? I believe they have little knowledge of RSL sub-Branches outside their office. Let's hope things will change.

The election of new Board Members is occurring this year so we hope that some people who have actually worked outside ANZAC House in sub-Branches are putting themselves forward for those elections because all ANZAC House seem to do is put obstacles in our way. In the future election look at the nominees history in the RSL. As well ask their ability to serve on a board. Just because a person has had higher rank in the Services does not mean they are capable of running our charity.

You will see a Notice to Members in my Secretary's Report. This is another requirement that all members must be notified by mail. The easiest way to do this is through our Newsletter as every Member is posted one.

Last general meeting I asked for volunteers to assist with a sub-Branch project.

No one volunteered. I asked if *Members just wanted to come along for a feed and drink or are they going to help like they should do*. I don't apologise for saying it. We have some great workers who help, but we need more.

***The editorial is entirely my own opinion and does not reflect the Sub-Branch Executive.*

Sub-Branch Meetings

| <u>Committee</u> | <u>Sub-Branch</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>Mondays 4.15pm</u> | <u>Sundays 10:30am</u> |
| 21 August | 27 August |
| 18 September | 24 September |
| 16 October | 22 October |



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings Members,

I'm not quite up to scratch at the moment. I have been backwards and forwards to the Eye Hospital for operations, hence I am not driving at the moment. I am (at the moment) awaiting for the fourth operation, so it will be some time before my car gets a run with me behind the wheel.

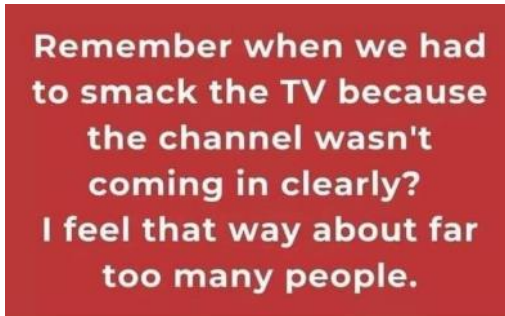
Brian Hilton is home from hospital then respite after many weeks. Good to see you back.

As you see on our last page, we have lost one of our oldest Members, Alex Macdonald. He has been cremated and will be transported to Rookwood where his ashes will be interred near his wife. We will let everyone know when this happens as it would be good to give him a RSL Tribute for his send off. May He Rest in Peace.

On a much brighter note, we took half of the Birrong Public School year 6 children to the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. A good day. We did the cooking for the kids lunch, with the ingredients arranged by Ron. Much cheaper and more healthy lunch as we included fruit. The next school will be July, 26th when we will be taking Christ The King Catholic School. Thank you to the Members who volunteered to go on that day. The one after that will be the other half of year 6 of Birrong Public School on 10 August. We need volunteers from our Members for that day.

Still on the Kokoda Memorial project, our buses are being driven by our Members. It is cheaper to hire buses and use our own than pay over \$1,000 for a bigger bus for a day. If you have a LR or above licence and can assist occasionally driving it, would be of great help.

Keep well. Stay safe. *Ian Muirhead*



SECRETARY'S REPORT

Letter from CEO RSLNSW John Black

Dear Gary

**RE: Request ID 47364 - Incorporation - Bass Hill
RSL S/B**

Thank you for your email below.

I can confirm that the Board has not yet formally re-considered the alternative incorporation form, the Incorporated Association (IA), but are aware of the situation. There are however several sub-Branches going through incorporation per SOP 13. You might consider liaising with North Bondi sub-Branch about the process etc. The sub-Branch President is a very experienced lawyer.



I recall you are aware that it has been very challenging to recruit a new 'Head of Legal' at Anzac House to lead the work required to update the Board on issues identified previously why the IA was not adopted as an option. I did in the interim brief out for advice on potential remedies to the issues that have been identified, and our new Head of Legal (now called General Counsel) is in the processing of reviewing this advice so further advice can be provided to the Board.

Regards, Jon

As you can see by the above letter from Jon Black "it is still be considered". I wrote back to Jon informing him we would not be interested in talking to anyone, including the North Bondi President about becoming a Company by Limited Guarantee, even if he is a lawyer.

Gary Roser, J.P.

NOTICE TO ALL RSL AUXILIARY MEMBERS

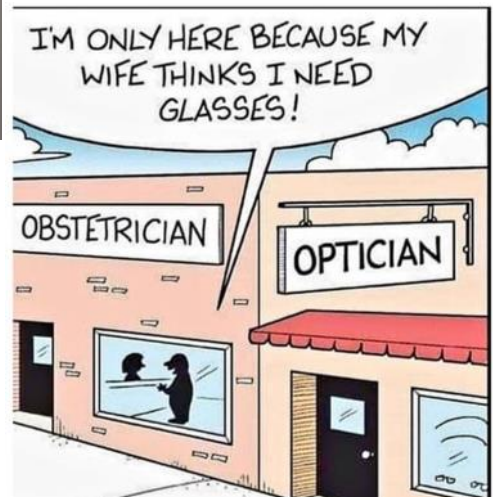
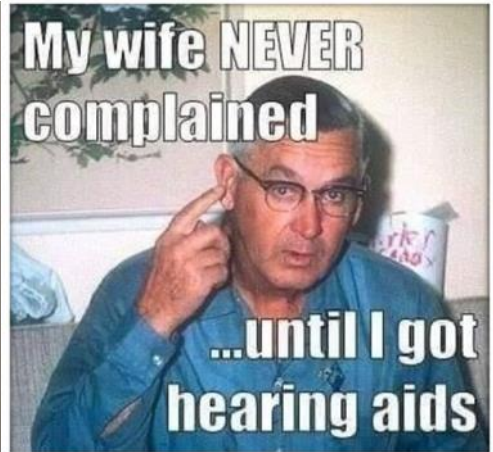
A booking fee of \$12.00 is required to be given to obtain a seat on the monthly fund raising bus trips.

If, for some reason, you have booked but unable to attend on the day of the bus outing then the money is forfeited to the Auxiliary.

Gary Roser, J.P.

On behalf of the Auxiliary Coordinator Dorothy Clancy

You Know When Your Over the Hill When.....



Today my daughter called me 'Birth Person.'

I replied, 'Yes Financial Drain.'

I woke up this morning determined to drink less, eat right and exercise...

But that was 4 hours ago...when I was younger and full of hope.

You told me you had lots of money invested

Yeah... in my Fishing gear



50th Anniversary of the Withdrawal of Australian troops from Vietnam War 1971 to 1973

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<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/vietnam-war-1962-1975/events/withdrawal-from-1971#:~:text=AWM%20P08298.013-,Royal%20Australian%20Air%20Force,aircraft%20left%20early%20in%201972.>

Australia's withdrawal of troops from South Vietnam began in 1971 and marked the end of its military involvement in the Vietnam War. The Australian Government initiated the process in 1970, aiming to gradually reduce the country's military commitment. By late 1972, most Australian combat troops had been withdrawn, and the remaining personnel were primarily involved in support and advisory roles. Finally, in December 1972, the Australian Government officially declared the end of its combat role in Vietnam. The withdrawal process was largely completed by early 1973, with all Australian troops returning home by 30 June.

A turning point in the war

February 1968 was a turning point in the Vietnam War with the Tet Offensive.

The Viet Cong mounted a series of attacks on major centres throughout South Vietnam. Although the Viet Cong suffered enormous losses, it was a psychological and propaganda victory for them. Surprised at the Viet Cong's ability to plan such large attacks across the country, including an assault on the United States (US) embassy, many in the US began to disbelieve assurances that the war was being won.

The fallout from the Tet Offensive also led the US President, Lyndon Johnson, to announce that he would not seek re-election. He was succeeded by Richard Nixon, who won office in November 1968.

However, the Tet Offensive had its intended effect. Only 4 months later, peace talks opened in Paris. Representatives of North and South Vietnam, the Viet Cong and the US met there in May 1968.

'Vietnamization' policy of pulling out

When sworn into office in January 1969, Nixon said that withdrawing US troops from South Vietnam was a priority. In a policy known as 'Vietnamization', the number of US combat troops was gradually reduced from June 1969, and South Vietnam soldiers took their places as that army expanded.

But the US continued to help South Vietnam by supplying weapons, further training its soldiers, and providing naval and aerial support for South Vietnamese soldiers on operations.

Throughout 1969, the US Government announced the withdrawal of multiple contingents from South Vietnam. It also announced cuts to the draft (military conscription). More importantly, a complete US withdrawal would follow. Then on 20 April 1970, the US announced the withdrawal of 150,000 troops over the next 12 months.

Two days later, the Australian Government, following the US lead, expressed its strategy for withdrawal from Vietnam. Prime Minister John Gorton announced the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (8RAR), would not be replaced when its tour of Vietnam ended in November 1970.

Since 1965, Australian ground formations have been engaged with our allies in resisting armed attack on the Government of South Vietnam. I now announce to the House that after consultation in recent weeks with the governments of Vietnam and the United States, who understand and accept our approach, the Government has decided that one Australian infantry battalion and some supporting personnel will be withdrawn from South Vietnam. This reduction to our force in Vietnam will be effected by withdrawing, without replacement, the 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, which at present is scheduled to complete its tour of duty in November next.

[The Hon John Gorton PM, Parliament of Australia, 22 April 1970]

Gloomy outlook

Vietnamization meant that the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN) would double in size. This would need extra military trainers, resulting in an expanded role for the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV). The number of personnel in the AATTV increased in the war's final phase.

However, the ARVN was ill-equipped and unable to match the North Vietnamese Army in the field. Early in 1971, Australia's Joint Intelligence Organisation, reporting on the progress of Vietnamization, described the ARVN as 'uneven in quality' and suffering from poor leadership.

Australian military officials in Phuoc Tuy and Saigon reported that the local ARVN would meet significant difficulties after the Australian Task Force's battalions had left South Vietnam. To add to the gloomy outlook, few South Vietnamese had any confidence in their own government, which was regarded as corrupt and incompetent.

The biggest mistake was the failure to go about a fair dinkum approach of boosting the South Vietnamese Army in the early stages, giving them a fair allocation of helicopters and artillery and the like, and above all else comprehensive training. Subsequently, after the Tet Offensive in 1968 and after President Nixon replaced President Johnson in early 1969, the catch-cry went up that 'Vietnamisation would turn things around' and a huge effort was attempted, finally, to boost the South Vietnamese Army. It was too little, too late.'

Tim Fischer, 1RAR, quoted in Vietnam: our war – our peace, Department of Veterans' Affairs, pp 128-129

Last personnel to serve

On 8 August 1971, Prime Minister Billy McMahon announced that the remainder of the Task Force would be withdrawn at the end of the year.

Around 5,000 personnel and over 7,000 tonnes of equipment were withdrawn from South Vietnam in stages.

Most Army combat troops and members of supporting arms (Navy, Air Force) were home by December 1971. Only small detachments providing logistics and security remained in the country until the Australian Military Forces, Vietnam, was disbanded on 5 March 1972. These troops arrived home on 6 March.

1st Australian Task Force

“... it very simply wasn't finished the way it should have been. I'm not saying we should have won. That would have been preferable of course to losing, but the way it was done was a heap of shit because we left many, many good South Vietnamese people in the lurch and it was like turning your back on your best mate and walking away. It shouldn't have happened. That is politics though ... Nothing to do with us, but it left a very nasty, dirty taste in a lot of people's mouths. It still does.”

[Corporal Anthony Hughes, 7RAR, quoted in Michael Caulfield, The Vietnam Years, Hachette Australia, 2007 p 434. Drawing on interview no 2093 in the Australians at War Film Archive]

Australia's last battalions to serve in combat were the 3rd and 4th Battalions, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR and 4RAR). Both units arrived in South Vietnam in 1971. 3RAR returned home in October 1971, followed in December by 4RAR.

One of the last Australian units to leave was 86 Transport Platoon, Royal Australian Army Service Corps (RAASC).



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

FOD/71/0507/VN

Lighters packed with 3RAR vehicles approach HMAS Sydney, at Vung Tau, South Vietnam, 6 October 1971. The departure of 3RAR troops and vehicles was the first major move in withdrawing the Australian forces. AWM FOD/71/0507/VN



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

CUN/71/0538/VN

Members of 4RAR/NZ (Anzac) leaving Nui Dat for Vung Tau inside a RAAF Iroquois helicopter. Other troops in 4RAR were transported by road convoys and with RAAF Caribou aircraft, ending their combat role in South Vietnam, November 1971.

***AWM
CUN/71/0538/
VN***

44892 Second Lieutenant William Thomas 'Bill' Denny AM served in South Vietnam with 86 Transport Platoon from 29 January 1971 to 9 March 1972.

“We were going home ... Walking through empty buildings, this seemed a special moment in time – doors banging in the wind and the base eerily deserted. Vietnamese workers were crying and distressed. I lied to them, reassuring them that we would be back 'if the VC come'. As it turned out, the Viet Cong did come – four weeks later – but we were never going to go back. I never really got over the friends I lost in Vietnam, nor the desertion of those we had so comprehensively fought to support and protect. The last of us formed the final convoy and headed down to De Long Pier, then by landing craft out to HMAS Sydney.”



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P08298.013

The vehicle compound of 86 Transport Platoon, full of trucks and semi-trailers, Vung Tau, South Vietnam, about 1971. AWM P08298.013

Royal Australian Air Force

No. 9 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), left South Vietnam in December 1971. Some logistics personnel and the last of No. 35 Squadron's Caribou aircraft left early in 1972.

However, South Vietnam descended into chaos in 1975. Civilians were trying to flee from a major North Vietnamese offensive. Some RAAF members played a significant role in humanitarian efforts during the final days of the Vietnam War. They counted among their number the last Australian service personnel to leave Vietnam.

Australian Army Assistance Group Vietnam

When the Australian Military Forces, Vietnam, disbanded on 5 March 1972, it was replaced with the smaller Australian Army Assistance Group Vietnam (AAAGV).



South Vietnamese refugees crowd the cargo compartment of an RAAF Detachment S Hercules in April 1975. AWM P05608.005

The role of the AAAGV was to help train South Vietnamese ground forces and Cambodian troops in South Vietnam. It comprised:

- AAAGV Headquarters, including a guard, an escort platoon and a signals unit in Saigon
- Australian Army Training Team Vietnam.

The Nominal Roll records 103 Army personnel who served with the AAAGV in South Vietnam.

After the Whitlam Government was elected on 5 December 1972, it decided to withdraw the last of the Australian troops from South Vietnam. So the AAAGV was disbanded on 17 December 1972. The last veterans of the AAAGV, including the AATTV, left South Vietnam in two RAAF C-130 aircraft on 18 December.

Australian Army Training Team Vietnam

When the Task Force combat units were withdrawn in 1971, Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) members remained with the AAAGV. However, the unit reverted to its original role of providing training.

The Nominal Roll records 987 veterans who served with the AATTV in South Vietnam.

The last members of AATTV in South Vietnam were withdrawn on 18 December 1972. The unit was disbanded in Australia on 16 February 1973.

Embassy Guard Platoon

On 18 December 1972, the Australian Embassy Guard Platoon (Saigon) was raised in South Vietnam. Personnel were transferred from the disbanded Australian Army Assistance Group Vietnam (AAAGV) into the unit.

The role of the platoon was to protect the Australian embassy in Saigon.

The Nominal Roll records 36 veterans who served with the Embassy Platoon Guard in Saigon, the last of them coming home on 30 June 1973.

“We knew one day we would be overrun – but we did not know what day. Many felt that it would happen in 1973, after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, so we had some luck that it lasted till 1975.”

Van Nhung Tran quoted in Michael Caulfield, The Vietnam Years

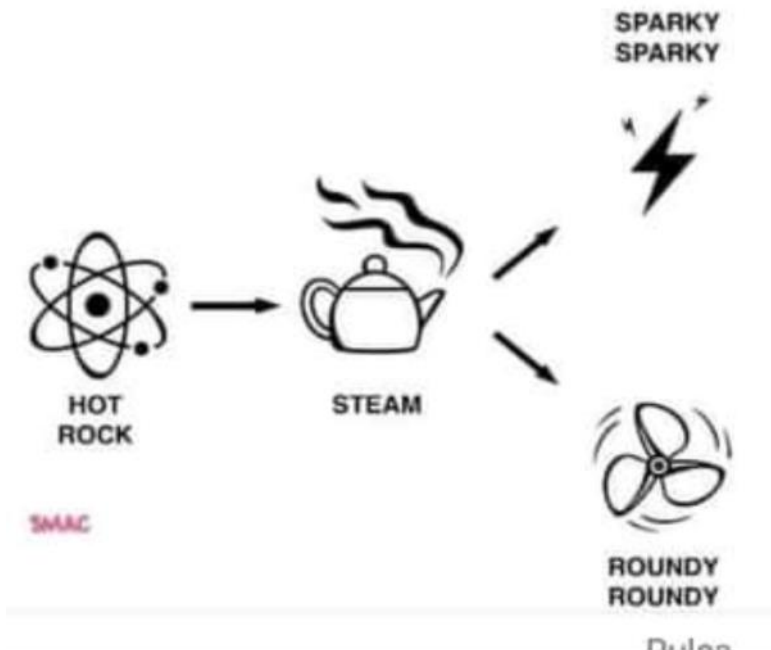
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“Everything is changing. People are taking their comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke.” Will Rogers

The explanation from a pusser to a grunt

Nuclear propulsion on a submarine explained



A Personal Opinion By [Tony Wright](#)

May 31, 2023 — 4.03pm

Long before an Australian prime minister made a play at becoming Scotty the Magnificent by secretly assuming the jobs of five other ministers, thus rendering Australian political satire a critically endangered species, the Royal Australian Navy's backroom operatives had set the bar high for the likes of *Utopia's* writers.

Indeed, a cold dismay is said to settle upon the senior executive service of what we might call the Defence Department's Underwater Assets (acquisitions, repairs and creative excuses) branch whenever the word submarine is spoken aloud.

It is not simply the sudden ditching of the French in favour of AUKUS. It's not even the long and terrible affair of the Collins Class submarine launch back in 1993, though it is related.

Who in Special Projects, Navy, could forget that HMAS Collins wasn't anywhere near ready to be launched and was missing its entire combat system? But with Prime Minister Paul Keating and the mass media all steaming eagerly to the dockyards for the grand event, what could be done?

Hastily, gaps in the Collins' hull were covered with plywood and painted black in a desperate effort to fool photographers.

"The submarine construction is on schedule, on cost, and meets or exceeds all performance criteria," enthused Keating, apparently blind to the plywood. True story.

HMAS Collins, it transpired, wouldn't be cleared for operational service for another seven years after its splendid "launch", and all other five subs were late. At one point, some of the subs could float, but reportedly couldn't submerge, which seemed problematic on a *Utopia* scale.

But no, it wasn't simply this complete cock-up but the knock-on effect, the bane of any public servants' life, that caused Underwater Assets to suffer its most dreadful humiliation.

Navy, in its touchingly optimistic belief that the wonderful new Collins machines would soon rule beneath the waves, set about decommissioning its ageing Oberon class fleet of little submarines. One of the prehistoric Oberons, HMAS Otway, was altogether removed from the water in 1994 and ended up – for reasons that would take an entertaining episode to explain – on display in the main street of Holbrook, a town on the Hume Highway north of Albury, which is to say, a very long way from the ocean.

And then, following the well-known premise that what can go wrong will go wrong, one of the two Oberons still sailing backed into a concrete pylon in Botany Bay and bent its rudder post, rendering its rudder useless. There was, of course, no spare part available for such an ancient vessel.

With not a Collins class sub anywhere near ready to defend the nation, Australia's submarine fleet was reduced to one. No one dared breathe what might happen if its old diesel motor gave out.

Here, dear reader, the Royal Australian Navy achieved peak *Utopia*. An emergency brain-storming session caused someone to recall the beached Oberon in Holbrook. Surely, it would still have a rudder post?

A team of naval engineers and a unit of Defence negotiators, complete, we imagine, with fat chequebooks, were dispatched to Holbrook to plead with the town's worthies to allow the rear end of HMAS Otway – known in Navy parlance as “the duck’s arse” – to be removed and carted away on the back of a large truck to Sydney.

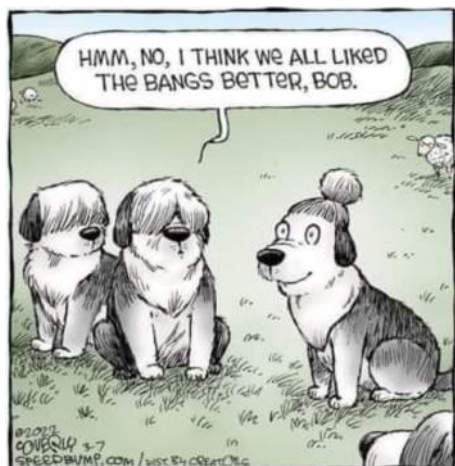
And so it came to pass. The rudder post was extracted from the duck’s arse in Sydney and transferred to the submarine, its rear end was returned to Holbrook and re-fitted to the grounded HMAS Otway and Underwater Assets’ honour was restored. Match that, *Utopia*.

Happily, AUKUS’ nuclear subs, allegedly, are on the way. What delicious material might be found within Underwater Assets over the next decade? Or two. Or three.



HMAS Otway slips past Fort Denison in 1971.
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH





We live in a time where intelligent people are being silenced so that stupid people won't be offended.

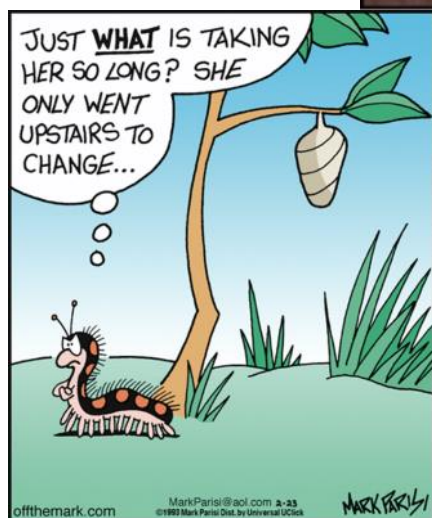
I was watching a show for about 10 minutes, and this lady was listing all of these great things to do for fun. Then I realized that it's one of the religious channels, and she was reading a list of sins.

A man and a woman were traveling in a train.

Woman : Every time you smile, I feel like inviting you to my place.

Man : Awwww! Are you single ?

Woman : No, I am a Dentist....





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HMAS Choules has been conducting helicopter flight trials with the MH-60R Seahawk helicopter. These trials facilitate the development of ship's helicopter operating limits that ensure safe take off and landing conditions for the aircraft to operate at sea. Trials were conducted both during the day and at night to ensure safe conditions were proven under differing conditions .



Able Seaman Maritime Logistics Supply Chain Isaiah Laws, Leading Seaman Maritime Logistics Supply Chain Emmanuel Alvestir and Able Seaman Boatswains Mate Nicholas Gusling from HMAS Choules Standing Sea Fire and Emergency Party conduct training drills for a helicopter crash on deck whilst off the NSW coast.

***“Old age is not as honourable as death,
but most people want it.” Native American Proverb***

HMAS Adelaide Departs From Dry Dock

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Landing Helicopter Dock HMAS Adelaide moved into the dry dock at Navy's Fleet Base East in May 2017. Following the docking, Defence undertook a range of activities including access to, and a detailed inspection of the propulsion pods, defect rectification and maintenance.

HMAS Adelaide was undocked in late June 2017 and is set to undergo sea trials, it is expected she will return to her operational capability program over the months to follow.

Defence has worked closely with the original equipment manufacturers – BAE, Navantia and Siemens – to identify the causes of the issues.



HMAS Adelaide is returned to her regular berth after a period of maintenance within Captain Cook Graving Dock, Fleet Base East,

“The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age.” ~ Lucille Ball

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Photographer:
CPL Nicole Dorrett

An Australian Army rifleman from Battle Group Ram cleans a F89 Minimi light machine gun during Exercise Diamond Strike 23 at Townsville Field Training Area, Queensland.



Photographer:
CPL Nicole Dorrett

Exercise Southern Jackaroo 23 was held underneath the Diamond Strike suite of exercises and held between Australian Army personnel from Brisbane's 7th Brigade, the Japanese Ground Self Defence Force and the United States Marine Corps in Queensland's Townsville Field Training Area from 19 Jun – 14 Jul 23. The exercise was aimed at deepening our relationship with the US and Japan, by exercising combined force interoperability and capacity to respond to events in our region. This year also included the military forces of Tonga, France, and Fiji, which demonstrated a commitment to our partners not only through disaster relief, but also into our security response planning. The exercise focused on foundation war-fighting and combined arms training from platoon to company-level with blank and live-fire components. This exercise demonstrated the growing strength and sophistication of our engagement with allies and partners in the region.

An Australian Army M1A1 Abrams Tank from Battle Group Heeler

EXERCISE SEA EXPLORER

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An Australian Army soldier from the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment scans for threats on Lindeman Island during an Australian Amphibious Force night raid



Photographer
SGT Andrew Sleeman

In June 2023 the Australian Defence Force conducted Exercise Sea Explorer across the coast of North Queensland. Exercise Sea Explorer prepared the Amphibious Ready Unit for certification. The Australian Amphibious Force train closely with the Royal Australian Navy's HMAS Adelaide and HMAS Choules, as well as a beach landing force comprising of infantry, armoured vehicles, artillery, aviation and logistic elements optimised for amphibious raids and assaults. The Sea Series of exercises enhances joint interoperability of the Australian Army and Royal Australian Navy's amphibious capabilities.



Photographer
SGT Andrew Sleeman

The Ground Combat Element of the Australian Amphibious Force disembarks a 5th Aviation Regiment CH-47 Chinook on Lindeman Island during a night raid

C-130J-30 Hercules

<https://www.airforce.gov.au/aircraft/c-130j-hercules>



The C-130J-30 Hercules is a medium-sized tactical air-lifter which can deliver cargo to airfields with short unsurfaced runways, and airdrop cargo and paratroops by parachute.

A fleet of 12 C-130J-30 Hercules are operated from RAAF Base Richmond by No. 37 Squadron. The aircraft were delivered to the base between 1999 and 2001.

The Australian Defence Force relies extensively on the C-130J-30 when deploying personnel and aid. The aircraft can also be used in other roles, such as search and survivor assistance, and medical evacuation.

The C-130J-30 Hercules can carry up to 124 passengers, or eight pallets of cargo. It can work alongside other airlifters, including the C-27J Spartan and C-17A Globemaster III.

Upgrades to the C-130J-30 have enhanced communications and information-sharing, and improved the aircraft's endurance during battle.

Specifications

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Manufacturer | Lockheed Martin |
| Role | Tactical and medium transport |
| Crew | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pilot• Co-pilot• Loadmaster |
| Length | 34.4m |
| Height | 10.1m |
| Wingspan | 40.4m |
| Weight | 79,378kg maximum (19,500kg payload) |
| Engines | Four Allison AE2100D3 turboprops (4,691 shaft horsepower each) driving 6-blade variable-pitch propellers |
| Range | 6,852 km (no payload) |
| Ceiling | 40,000 feet |
| Cruise speed | 643 km/h |
| Capacity | <p>Depending on configuration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• up to 124 passengers• 88 paratroops• 84 stretcher patients and four medical attendants• 19,598kg of cargo |

LAST POST



Alexander William MacDonald

Corporal, N24459, NX150414

C.M.F. & A.I.F.

15 November 1919 - 10 June 2023



Lest We Forget

STOP PRESS

Spring Luncheon

Saturday, 2nd September 2023

A flyer with all details is included with Newsletter